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2 December 1949

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Possible Widespread Violence or Rebellion in the Philippines during December

In view of the information reported in the ORE Daily Summary of 2 December 1949 concerning a possible mid-December rebellion in the Philippines, a revision of IN No. 243 dated 14 October 1949, "Violence During Philippine Elections," is believed necessary. The conclusions set forth in IN 243 were:

1. Although demonstrations and violence involving Communist-led Huk or other dissident elements are expected throughout the Philippine Republic before and during the November 8 national elections, a general uprising is considered unlikely.
2. Unofficials in Manila may be accidental victims of violence associated with Philippine fractional disputes both in demonstrations before the election and at the polls. This same risk is faced by US military personnel in the Clark Field area of Central Luzon.
3. Philippine Government officials may be injured or killed in demonstrations in Manila but any attempt at a local coup is improbable and would, in any event, be unsuccessful.

ORE's estimate of events since the 8 November elections is summarized below:

1. Post-election protest rallies, demonstrations, and sporadic violence will probably continue in the Philippines for some time. In addition, the possibility of an armed uprising, together with political assassinations, has now increased.
2. Such an uprising, however, would probably be short-lived; there is at present no evidence that it would receive the

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widespread support necessary for its success, or that it could be accompanied by substantial disaffection within the Armed Forces.

3. If such an uprising should occur, US citizens and property in Manila may be accidentally injured and US military personnel and equipment in central Luzon may be more vulnerable to attack by Communist-led forces.

Discussion

Protest rallies, demonstrations and sporadic incidents of violence have been post-election developments in the Philippines and probably will continue for some time. However, there has been a recent increase in general lawlessness, resulting in part from considerable dissatisfaction with the conduct and results of the election. Reported insurrection plans by the defeated Nacionalista Party increase the possibility that a general uprising, together with assassination of high government officials, will be attempted during the next four weeks. Most likely dates for the attempt are either: (1) on or about 13 December, when the special joint session of the Philippine Congress meets to proclaim the official results of the election; or (2) on or about 30 December, when President-elect Quirino is inaugurated and Liberal Party legislators assume office.

In estimating the outcome of such an uprising, three major factors must be considered: (1) leadership of the revolt; (2) capabilities of the Philippine Armed Forces (including the Constabulary); and (3) the extent of both popular discontent over the recent election results and disaffection within the Armed Forces.

1. Possible leadership of a rebellion. The most effective leader of a general rebellion would be Jose Laurel, defeated Nacionalista presidential candidate. Laurel enjoys great popularity and is the only known opposition leader capable of gaining widespread confidence and support among the Philippine people. Although there is no evidence that Laurel is directly involved in Nacionalista plans, it is extremely doubtful that a Nacionalista-inspired general rebellion could be planned without Laurel's knowledge. In the event that a leader figure assumed leadership of such an uprising, the movement probably could not succeed without Laurel's active support. Such support must be considered a distinct possibility.

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2. Capability of Philippine Armed Forces to suppress major Nationalist uprisings. Government forces are believed capable of quelling a Nationalist uprising unless they are forced to cope simultaneously with a large-scale offensive by the Communist-led Huk. Even in this event, they probably are capable of maintaining the security of the Republic unless such a Huk offensive and the Nationalist uprising were under unified leadership. There are current indications that the Huk may be planning to launch an offensive in central Luzon as well as to join in the local uprising which broke out in the province of Batangas on 19 November. There is no indication, however, that Huk members or leaders are participating in the reported Nationalist plans for revolt, although such participation is possible.

3. Discontent among the people and disaffection within the Armed Forces. There has been considerable popular dissatisfaction with the Government's conduct of the recent election. However, the margin of President Quirino's victory over Laurel suggests that, even without the known irregularities at the polls, Quirino would have won the election. A majority of the Philippine people, therefore, are presumed to support the administration. Aside from the minority Nationalists, there is no evidence that a significant segment of the Philippine people would support a revolt against the Government.

Reports current during the election period indicated that considerable Nationalist support existed among the Armed Forces—especially in the Constabulary. However, during the present local uprising in Batangas province, believed to be sponsored and directed largely by disgruntled Nationalists, there was no indication of disaffection among either the Constabulary or Armed Forces troops dispatched to the scene of action and no reports of reluctance on the part of Government forces to engage the Batangas dissidents have been received.

US Interests

In the event that the Nationalist rebellion is attempted, the Philippine Government might be unable to provide adequate protection for US citizens and their property in the capital city of Manila, because of other heavy demands on its security forces. In central Luzon, the Huk would be encouraged by the uprising both to increase attacks on US military personnel in the vicinity of the US Air Force base at Clark Field and to attempt raids on stocks of US military equipment there.

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